

LETTERS TO THE TIMES

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CIA Influence in NSA Alleged in Detail by a Regional Officer

During the course of the controversy over CIA financing of the National Student Assn., both CIA apologists and officers of NSA have maintained that the CIA did not influence the domestic and internal activity of NSA in any way. This is not true.

In the first place, members of the International Commission of NSA have for many years ignored or distorted the policy instructions of NSA's policy-making body, the National Student Congress. To many of us in NSA this phenomenon was a mystery, although rumors of CIA influence have been circulating for some time; this perversion of internal democracy had a decidedly damaging effect on the other activities of NSA.

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It has long been the desire of NSA's membership to stay out of the cold war, but through expense-paid international junkets, offers of lucrative government positions, and plain blackmail, the CIA coerced the NSA International Commission into playing the role of a junior State Department.

It should be pointed out that the CIA's goals and methods were not as pure as they would pretend: they frequently involved the cynical and undemocratic manipulation of international student politics for very questionable purposes. Actions such as denial of travel grants and visas to certain delegations to the International Student Conference came to light at the 1965 National Student Congress, but the delegates were helpless to remedy the situation.

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In the second place, NSA has suffered domestically because CIA-influenced officers and staff have used their influence to prevent changes in the association's policies which they felt might be contrary to the wishes of the CIA. For example, persons who were essentially on the CIA payroll participated in the debate on the NSA resolutions on Vietnam and the draft. In part because of this, NSA has been fighting an uphill battle to remain responsive to the needs of its 250,000 members on the college campuses of America.

It is a sorry fact that NSA was unable to publicly clean its own house, but the press exposure may hopefully serve as a reminder to the public to be on guard against secret governmental intrusions in the affairs of open and democratic private organizations.

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